



PSYC 450 Positive Psychology: The Science of Behavioral Change

Course Syllabus Spring Semester 2025

Instructor: John L. Dennis, Ph.D.

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, Section A 9-1030AM, Section B 12:30-2:00PM

Email: john.dennis@unipg.it

Course Type: Course with a Service Learning component

Lab/Site-Visits Fee: \$55.00

"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known." - Carl Sagan

"If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?" – Albert Einstein

Course Description

This course introduces students to the foundational concepts and emerging developments in **positive psychology**, a field focused on understanding, testing, discovering, and promoting the factors that enable individuals and communities to thrive (Sheldon et al., 2000). Positive psychology scientifically examines **well-being, happiness, flow, personal strengths, compassion, creativity**, and the characteristics of groups and institutions that foster positive growth. Moving beyond an exclusive focus on individual happiness, this field emphasizes flourishing at both individual and group levels, highlighting the interconnected nature of well-being.

The course is divided into two parts. The **first part** explores key theories and research, providing a foundation for understanding positive psychology's core principles. The **second part** addresses theoretical conflicts and their practical applications, encouraging critical thinking and real-world problem-solving. Each session incorporates experiential learning exercises to enhance personal well-being and provide opportunities to apply course concepts to real-life scenarios.

By the end of the course, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of positive psychology concepts and their relevance to personal and group flourishing. They will also develop practical skills in applying these ideas to promote well-being and resilience. Particular emphasis is placed on exploring how improving individual well-being contributes to group success, and vice versa.

A central component of the course is the **Service Learning Project**, which enables students to apply positive psychology principles to assist **Fondazione Città del Sole** in achieving its mission. This project provides students with hands-on experience fostering growth and thriving within a real-world organizational context, reinforcing their ability to connect theory to practice.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures
Reflect on positive psychology concepts	Class Discussion, Presentations, Podcast
Develop applicable critical thinking skills regarding positive psychology concepts	Tickets, Class Discussion
Generate effective leadership skills	Presentations, Service Learning Project
Analyze how organizations and the people within them work	Ticket, Service Learning Project
Design a project with a community partner that applies positive psychology concepts as viable solutions for a well-defined issue	Service Learning Project, Podcast
Create and broadcast materials that will help students to start thinking about their future careers	Class Discussion, Podcast, Community Engagement Presentations

Course Materials

Books (selected chapters) - The “mashups”

The Happiness-Flow Connection: A Blueprint for Thriving

Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. Penguin Press.

Czikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper & Row.

Harnessing the Whole Self: Balancing Darkness and Discipline

Kashdan, T. & Biswas-Diener, R. (2014). *The upside of your dark side: Why your whole self - not just your “good” self - drives success and fulfillment*. Random House.

Manz, C. (2003). *Emotional discipline: The power to choose how you feel; 5 life changing steps to feeling better every day*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

The Essence of Meaning: From Survival to Significance

Frankl, V. E. (2014). *Man's search for meaning*. Beacon Press.

Wolf, S. (2012). *Meaning in life and why it matters*. Princeton University Press.

Evolving Self-Actualization: From Being to Transcendence

Maslow, A. H. (2018). *Toward a psychology of being*. Wilder Publications.

Kaufman, S. B. (2021). *Transcend: The new science of self-actualization*. Penguin.

All the required chapters will be available online on the course Google Drive.

Instruction Methods

This course employs a flipped classroom instructional method, in which students acquire foundational knowledge before each session. During class, students actively engage in clarifying and applying their new knowledge through interactive activities, with the professor serving as a facilitator to guide the process.

Assignments and Tools for Collaborative Learning

The following cooperative tools support the flipped classroom approach and ensure active participation:

1. **Tickets:**
Students will write and submit brief reactions (250–500 words) to assigned readings via Google Drive at least 24 hours before class.
 2. **Peer Reviews:**
Students will review and engage with materials submitted by their peers to foster collaborative learning and diverse perspectives.
 3. **Guided Discussions:**
Students will lead portions of classroom discussions through mini-presentations based on readings, exercises, case studies, and individual or team assignments.
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Formatting Guidelines for Written Submissions

- **Font:** 12-point Garamond
- **Spacing:** Single-spaced
- **Alignment:** Justified
- **Header Information:**
Each submitted file must include the following details in the top left corner of the first page:
 - [Specify the required details, e.g., Name, Date, Assignment Title]

First Name Last Name

File type (e.g., Ticket #1, Podcast)

Book section name, article title, or Podcast title

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Laptop/Smartphone Policy

Research consistently shows that open laptops and smartphones in the classroom create distractions, both visually and audibly, not only for the users but also for those around them. Additionally, typing notes often leads to less cognitive processing compared to handwriting, as the speed of typing can hinder deeper engagement with the material.

For these reasons, students are asked to refrain from using computers and phones during class and instead take notes using a regular notebook. However, the following exceptions apply:

1. **Accommodations:** If you have a vision impairment or other documented accommodation that requires the use of a device.
2. **Tablets for Note-Taking:** If you are using a tablet specifically for note-taking, provided it is not connected to the internet during class.
3. **In-Class Tutorials:** During in-class tutorials focused on online research tools or similar activities.
4. **Special Permission:** If you discuss your specific need to use a laptop during class with me during office hours and receive approval.

This policy is intended to enhance focus, participation, and learning for all students.

Assessments

Attendance	10%
One-to-One Professor Meetings	5%
Tickets	20%
Presentations	15%
Podcast	15%
Peer Reviews	15%
Service Learning Project	15%
Community Engagement Presentation	5%

Attendance (10%)

Student attendance is mandatory for all courses at the Umbra Institute (see below [Attendance Policy](#)).

One-to-One Professor Meetings (5%)

Students will meet with the professor one-on-one for two 10-minute meetings during the semester. Those meetings can only be in person. You will need to complete 1 before the break. Use the [Calendly link](#) to reserve those meetings.

Tickets (20%)

Students will submit one ticket (250-500 words) per reading. Odd-numbered tickets will be completed in class, while even-numbered tickets will be submitted online to Google Drive at least 24 hours before class. See the [ticket rubric](#) to understand better what is expected of you. For articles and book chapters, tickets must answer the following 4 W's:

1. **What** was the reading's main question in a single sentence?
2. **What** was done/discussed, and what did they find?
3. **How** does the reading relate to other readings, in-class discussions, and/or class projects?
4. **Which** part of the reading did you find useful or are you critical of?

The first two "W's" are designed to help students recall the key points from the reading, while the last two "W's" encourage them to integrate their experiences and thoughts with the material. Remember, you are writing for

your future self, so it's crucial to include examples, definitions, and context. Write in a way that allows you to reconstruct the reading and its significance, even if you revisit your ticket five years from now.

After your ticket has been peer-reviewed, you will need to revise it based on feedback and submit it for a final review. Keep in mind that tickets must be between 250–500 words. Rather than summarizing the entire reading, focus on the part you found most engaging or thought-provoking. For additional guidance, refer to the detailed prompt available on Moodle.

Presentations (15%)

Students will lead a portion of the class with a short presentation of their ticket during the semester. Presentations and student-led discussions will typically occupy the first half of the class, while the professor will guide the discussion during the remaining half.

Presentations should include an activity for the class and a discussion of the reading that connects to the reading. Activities for the class might include filling out a questionnaire, doing an improvisation game, breaking into groups to answer specific questions, etc. For activity ideas, it is highly recommended to consult online resources, as we did in the first class. These resources usually provide a good starting point for class activities.

Do not rely solely on Google Slide presentations. The presentation should include a summary of the reading—enough that anyone who has not done the reading can follow what you are talking about. Presenters should be able to answer the four questions for the tickets, and then focus on the part of the reading they find most interesting.

All presentations will have two co-presenters. Please see the [Presentation Rubric](#) on Moodle to assist you as you construct your presentations. Please see Moodle for a detailed prompt.

Podcast (15%)

Students will work in groups of 3-4 to submit one podcast entry (about 7 minutes) to Google Drive based on classroom experiences during the semester. We will periodically use class time to create a Podcast notes page, then divide the class into groups and work during class time to develop podcasts according to our Podcast schedule, which will be shared with you at the beginning of the semester.

Podcasts will follow the [Podcast hourglass structure](#), which includes:

1. A narrative story that creates conflict.
2. Core concepts from the readings.
3. Implications of those concepts.
4. A narrative story that helps resolve the conflict for listeners.

Podcasts will always include concepts from the readings, but the narrative story can be based on the Service Learning Project, interviews with other MPP professors, other students, Italian UNIPG students, or any other exercise, discussion, etc., that occurs inside and outside the classroom. Once the Podcast has been reviewed and approved, it will be submitted for publication on the Umbra Institute podcast channel. Please see Moodle for a detailed prompt.

Peer Reviews (15%)

Student pairs will review Presentations, Tickets submitted by fellow students, and Podcast entries. Reviews should consist of helpful and constructive comments, providing "additive feedback" by making suggestions about what the writer might add or develop further.

Students are responsible for completing one Ticket peer review per class. Podcast reviews and presentation reviews will be assigned during the semester. For presentation reviews, two randomly assigned students will review presentations to help improve them. A signup sheet for all peer reviews will be shared on Google Drive.

Reviews are due within 48 hours of when the document you are reviewing has been submitted to Google Drive or completed in class. Please use the [peer review guidelines and rubric](#). For detailed prompts, please see Moodle.

Service Learning Project (15%)

For this project, students will work collaboratively as a team with **Fondazione Città del Sole**, utilizing interviews, observations, and/or surveys to address the following questions:

1. **Identify the Problem:** What is the nature of the area in need of improvement?
 2. **Analyze Causes:** What are the underlying causes of the issue?
 3. **Apply Concepts:** How can organizational behavior principles be applied and extended to address the problem?
 4. **Action Steps:** What specific actions should the organization take to resolve the issue?
 5. **Implement Changes:** What changes should be implemented to achieve improvement?
 6. **Anticipate Challenges:** What barriers, obstacles, or challenges might arise?
 7. **Evaluate Risks:** What are the risks, costs, and potential unintended consequences of your recommendations?
 8. **Communicate Findings:** How will you present your findings to the organization and address potential resistance?
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Guidelines for Participation and Grading

- **Ongoing Engagement:** Grading for the Service Learning Project is based on regular, active participation throughout the semester.
- **Collaboration Tools:** It is highly recommended to use Notes pages within Google Drive to document and organize information gathered for the project.
 - Notes can include article summaries, links to videos, images, interviews, and other relevant materials.
- **Class Discussions:** Teams will regularly engage with the above questions during class to refine their insights and recommendations.

For further details, please refer to the detailed prompt available on Moodle.

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations (5%)

During **Special Academic Events Week**, the class will deliver a 15-minute presentation summarizing the project experience to the Umbra community. This will take place during the **Community Engagement Presentations** on **Thursday, April 24**.

Guidelines and the presentation order will be provided after the mid-semester break. **Participation in this event is mandatory** and constitutes an essential component of the community engagement grade.

Please see the [End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations Guidelines and Rubric](#). Please see Moodle for a detailed prompt.

Additional Notes

Feedback and Questions

This course is designed to be a valuable learning experience for all students. Feedback is welcome at any time during the semester. The professor can be reached most easily via email or in person before or after class. Students may also schedule an appointment if needed.

Email Policy

The professor responds to emails between *12:30 PM and 6:30 PM, Monday to Thursday*. Please plan your correspondence accordingly.

Participation

Active participation is essential for this course, which revolves around reading, interpreting, and collectively discussing the assigned materials. Success in participation is measured using the following rubric, with a maximum score of 5 points per class (1 point for each criterion):

1. **Being Present:** Attendance is crucial, as your insights and contributions enrich the class. Absences will negatively impact your participation grade. If you are absent, coordinate with a classmate to obtain notes, assignments, and handouts.
2. **Being Punctual:** Arriving on time demonstrates respect for your peers and the learning environment. If you anticipate being late, notify the professor at least 24 hours in advance.
3. **Being Prepared:** Ensure you have thoroughly completed all assigned work (readings, tickets, cases, exercises) before class. If you are unclear about upcoming assignments, ask in advance.
4. **Being Brave:** Contribute fully to discussions and activities, share your views, and ask questions. While speaking up can be intimidating, it enriches the discussion and benefits the entire class.
5. **Being Courteous:** Listen attentively to classmates and respond thoughtfully to their ideas. Disagreements should be expressed kindly and constructively, as they often spark meaningful dialogue.

Note: If participating in large group discussions is challenging for you, speak with the professor early in the semester. Together, you can develop strategies to build confidence and ensure meaningful participation. For questions about your participation grade, schedule an appointment during office hours before the semester ends.

Broadcasting

Over the semester, students will refine their work to a professional level, honing their skills to produce materials that are "so good they can't be ignored" (*So Good They Can't Ignore You* by Cal Newport). Exceptional projects—such as documents, videos, or photos—may be featured online, including on platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, or Slideshare.

The goal of this broadcasting initiative is to encourage students to create career-focused materials and adopt an entrepreneurial mindset, as outlined in *The Start-Up of You* by Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha. These activities aim to help students think strategically about their career development and personal branding.

Peer-Reviewed Research-Based Article

This course includes a unique opportunity for students to contribute to a project that may result in the submission of a peer-reviewed article after the semester concludes. Participation requires a commitment of approximately one hour per week and includes bi-weekly Zoom meetings (or as needed) at a mutually convenient time.

- **Authorship:** Students who contribute will be listed as first authors, in line with the professor's practice.
- **Skills Development:** You will learn to read and summarize original research articles, as well as organize the Service Learning project following APA guidelines.
- **Opportunities:** Students may submit their work for institutional recognition, such as an honors thesis, and potentially present at international conferences. The professor will provide guidance on applying for funding to support these opportunities.

For more information, refer to the detailed guidelines on Moodle.

Important Policies: Exams, Assignments, and Grading

- **Responsibility for Deadlines:** Students are responsible for keeping track of exam dates and assignment deadlines.
- **No Alternative Exam Dates:** Exams will only be held on the scheduled dates, and no alternative dates will be offered.
- **Late Work Policy:** Professors are not obligated to provide partial credit for late submissions. The Institute's default policy is to award a zero for any work submitted past the deadline, though individual professors may offer extensions at their discretion.
- **Travel Conflicts:** Students who book travel during an exam or assessment must adjust their plans or accept a zero for the missed work.

Grading Scale

Letter grades for all student work will be determined using the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A A-	93% - 100% 90% - 92%	Exceptional Excellent
B+ B B	87% - 89% 83% - 86% 80% - 82%	Superior
C+ C C	77% - 79% 73% - 76% 70% - 72%	Satisfactory
D+ D D	67% - 69% 63% - 66% 60% - 62%	Low Pass
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Grading Policies

Rounding Policy

Numerical grades will be rounded as follows: decimal values **1-4 are rounded down**, while **5-9 are rounded up**. For example:

- A grade of **89.4** will be rounded to **89.0**.
- A grade of **89.5** will be rounded to **90.0**.

Extensions and Late Work

- **Late Submissions:** Any work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of **zero**. Partial credit will not be given.
- **Extension Policy:** Each student is allowed **one 24-hour extension** during the semester, which may be used for any assignment **except the final project**. To use this extension, students must email the instructor **before the deadline**.
- **Late Work Beyond Extension:** Work submitted after the 24-hour extension period will also receive a grade of zero.
- **Exceptions:** Extensions or accommodations for late work may be granted by the Director for medical emergencies, special accommodations, or other legitimate reasons.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is **mandatory** for all classes and co-curricular activities.

- **Excused Absences:** Students may take up to **two sick days** per course without providing medical documentation. Beyond these two days, additional excused absences due to illness require documentation from a local physician or an Institute-approved doctor.
- **Unexcused Absences:** Each unexcused absence reduces the final course grade by **2% per absence**, up to a

maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action.

Student Responsibilities for Absences:

- Students are responsible for obtaining class notes and materials from peers and meeting with the professor during office hours if needed.
- **Make-Up Work:** Work missed due to excused absences may be made up within one week of returning to class. Tests and quizzes missed due to excused absences must be made up outside of class time and will differ slightly from the original version.

Field Trips:

Attendance on mandatory field trips is critical. Missing a mandatory field trip without a serious and timely reason communicated to Umbra staff will result in the **final grade being lowered by half a letter grade** (e.g., from a B+ to a B).

Legitimate Reasons for Excused Absences or Tardiness:

- Death in the immediate family
- Religious observances
- Illness or injury
- Local inclement weather
- Unavoidable medical appointments

Religious Observances:

Students wishing to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Director within **one week after the add/drop period**. Requests made after this deadline will not be accepted.

Tests and Graded Assignments:

- Scheduled times and dates for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and other graded assignments cannot be changed.
 - Students may only take exams during the scheduled times for their enrolled section, even if multiple sections of the same class are offered.
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Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to arrive on time for all classes.

- **Tardiness:** Arriving up to **15 minutes late** or leaving up to **15 minutes early** will result in a **0.5% deduction from the final grade** for each occurrence.
 - **Excessive Tardiness:** Arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early will be recorded as an unexcused absence.
 - **Remaining in Class:** Students are expected to remain present for the duration of the session, except for reasonable restroom breaks. Leaving class and not returning will result in an unexcused absence or a late penalty.
-

Academic Integrity

All forms of academic dishonesty, including:

- **Cheating:** Using unauthorized notes or copying from another student during exams.
- **Plagiarism:** Presenting another person's ideas or words as one's own without proper citation.
- **AI Use:** Submitting content generated by ChatGPT or other AI tools as part of an assignment constitutes plagiarism. Students found using such platforms will face the same consequences as other plagiarism cases, per the Institute's Academic Policy and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to adhere to Institute policies and respect the historical premises of the school.

- **Cell Phones:** Must be set to silent mode before class begins.
- **Electronics:** Computers and electronic devices are only permitted for note-taking or specific academic purposes approved in advance. Unauthorized use during lectures or discussions is prohibited. Earbuds are not permitted during class.

These policies are designed to maintain a productive learning environment and uphold academic integrity. For additional details, please refer to the Institute's Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

DAY 1 *Introduction and Course Overview*

DAY 2 *Presentation & Peer Review:*
The Happiness-Flow Connection: The How of Happiness, Lyubomirsky, Chapters 1 & 4

Tickets & Peer Review:
Ticket 1 - In class

Podcast:
Concepts discussed and initial notes due on GoogleDrive

WEEK 2

DAY 1 *Presentation & Peer Review:*
Harnessing the Whole Self: Kashdan, The upside of your dark side, Chapters 1 & 3

Tickets & Peer Review:
Ticket 2 - GoogleDrive

DAY 2 *Service Learning Project & Community Partner Introduction:*
In-class SLP & CP Intro presentation by Manuel Barbato & Margherita Garilli
Start notes page

Presentation & Peer Review:
The Essence of Meaning: Frankl, Man's search for meaning, Part One, pages 15-45

Tickets & Peer Review:
Ticket 3 - GoogleDrive

Podcast:
Updated notes due on GoogleDrive

WEEK 3

DAY 1 *Presentation & Peer Review:*
Evolving Self-Actualization: Maslow, Toward a psychology of being, Chapters 2 & 5

Tickets & Peer Review:
Ticket 4 - GoogleDrive

Service Learning Project:
Work through the project.

DAY 2 *Presentation & Peer Review:*
The Happiness-Flow Connection: Flow, Czikszentmihalyi, Chapters 3 & 4

Tickets & Peer Review:
Ticket 5 - In class

Service Learning Project:
Preparing for the site visit

DAY 3

Friday, February 7:

Service Learning Project:

Visit Fondazione Città del Sole Daily Center. A detailed itinerary will be sent early this week.

WEEK 4

DAY 1

Service Learning Project:

Debrief site visit

During this week the roommates from Fondazione Città del Sole will be in class to discuss the previous semester's project

Presentation & Peer Review:

Harnessing the Whole Self: Manz, Emotional discipline, Chapters 1 & 3

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 6 – GoogleDrive

DAY 2

Presentation & Peer Review:

The Essence of Meaning: Wolf, Meaning in life and why it matters, Chapters 1 & 2

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 7 - In class

Podcast:

Updated notes due on GoogleDrive

WEEK 5

DAY 1

Presentation & Peer Review:

Evolving Self-Actualization: Kaufman, Transcend, Chapters 1 & 3

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 8 – GoogleDrive

Service Learning Project:

During this week the class will visit the apartments of Fondazione Città del Sole

DAY 2

Podcasts:

Concepts discussed and 1st draft due on GoogleDrive

Service Learning Project

Work through the project.

WEEK 6

DAY 1

Presentation & Peer Review:

The Happiness-Flow Connection: The How of Happiness, Lyubomirsky, Chapters 6 & 8

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 9 - GoogleDrive

Service Learning Project:

During this week the class will visit the apartments of Fondazione Città del Sole

DAY 2

Service Learning Project:

Work through the project

One-to-One Professor Meetings:

First meeting must be completed before the break.

SEMESTER BREAK

WEEK 7

DAY 1

Presentation & Peer Review:

Harnessing the Whole Self: Kashdan, The upside of your dark side, Chapters 5 & 8

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 10 - In class

Service Learning Project:

Working on the Delphi Questionnaire

DAY 2

Presentation & Peer Review:

The Essence of Meaning: Frankl, Man's search for meaning, Logotherapy in a Nutshell

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 11 - GoogleDrive

Podcast:

Concepts discussed and 2nd draft due on GoogleDrive

WEEK 8

DAY 1

Presentation & Peer Review:

Evolving Self-Actualization: Maslow, Toward a psychology of being, Chapters 7 & 10

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 12 - In class

DAY 2

Service Learning Project:

Working on the Delphi Questionnaire

Podcasts:

Group work on podcasts

WEEK 9

DAY 1

Presentation & Peer Review:

The Happiness-Flow Connection: Flow, Csikszentmihalyi, Chapters 5 & 9

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 13 - GoogleDrive

Service Learning Project Development:

Working on the Delphi Questionnaire

DAY 2

Presentation & Peer Review:

Harnessing the Whole Self: Manz, Emotional discipline, Chapters 5 & 7

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 14 - In class

Podcast:

Concepts discussed and 3rd draft due on GoogleDrive

WEEK 10

DAY 1

Presentation & Peer Review:

The Essence of Meaning: Wolf, Meaning in life and why it matters, Chapters 4 & 6

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 15 - GoogleDrive

Service Learning Project Development:

Working on the Delphi Questionnaire

Podcast:

Start recordings.

DAY 2

Presentation & Peer Review:

Evolving Self-Actualization: Kaufman, Transcend, Chapters 7 & 10

Tickets & Peer Review:

Ticket 16 - In class

Service Learning Project:

Work through the project.

WEEK 11

DAY 1

Service Learning Project:

Analysis of the results of the Delphi Questionnaire

Work on the presentation for the partner

DAY 2

Service Learning Project:

Work on the presentation for Community Engagement Presentations

One-to-One Professor Meetings:

The second meeting must be completed before the end of week 11.

WEEK 12

DAY 1

Service Learning Project:

Presentation with the partner in class.

Podcast:

Final versions are due.

DAY 2

Service Learning Project:

Work on the presentation for Community Engagement Presentations.

Aperitivo at Numero 0 (Inclusive restaurant) with the roommates of the apartments.

The exact timing will be communicated early this week.

Tickets:

Final versions with all revisions due.

WEEK 13

Final Classes, Final Exams, & Special Academic Events Week

Thursday, April 24. Community Engagement Presentations. The full Special Academic Events Calendar will be provided later in the semester.

**PSYC 450 - Positive Psychology: The Science of Behavioral Change
Service Learning Project
Syllabus Appendix**

Service Learning Overview

Service learning is a form of experiential education integrated into a course where students:

- Engage in an organized activity or project designed to address a community need identified in collaboration with a community partner.
- Critically reflect on the connection between their community experience, course content, and learning goals.
- Participate in reciprocal learning, benefiting both the students and the community partners.

Successful service learning requires students to be flexible, creative, and self-initiated. Organization and open communication with the professor and team members are crucial for student success.

Service Learning Project Overview

Community Partner: Fondazione Città del Sole

Fondazione Città del Sole is a foundation committed to integrating people with disabilities into residential, work, and social environments and promoting inclusive education within communities. The foundation operates various projects led by educators and psychologists. Their primary initiative is a co-housing project where young people with special needs live alongside students or young professionals in the historic center in apartments. This setup helps them develop autonomy and integrate into the broader community. The foundation also runs a radio station called Stazione Panzana, a "Centro Diurno" (Day Center), and manages Umbria's first inclusive restaurant, Numero Zero.

Project Description and Goals

Students will conduct research through observational and conversational phases, aiming to provide the foundation with a document identifying issues and tension sources within some of the foundation's apartments. After identifying these problems, the class will propose solutions based on positive psychology principles to help create a peaceful and welcoming environment among the roommates.

Organization, Expectations, and Roles

Students will be divided into self-selected teams. Significant class time will be dedicated to the project's progress, but teams will also need to meet outside of class for approximately 1–2 hours per week for four weeks. Teams are responsible for dividing tasks to ensure equal contributions from all members throughout the project.

Group Presentation

Each team will collaborate on and deliver a detailed final presentation using PowerPoint. Every student is expected to complete a Presentation Feedback Form and engage with questions for other teams to foster a community of learning and support.

Presentation Guidelines:

- Use PowerPoint (ensure it is spell-checked).
- The presentation should be 10 minutes long.
- Each team member must contribute to the preparation and delivery.
- Rehearse the presentation as a group to ensure smooth content delivery, appropriate length, and transitions.

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentation

During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the Community Engagement Presentations on **Thursday, April 24** (the final week of the program). Guidelines and presentation order will be provided after the mid-semester break.

Presentation Structure:

1. Introduce the community partner.
2. Describe the project.
3. Discuss takeaways and challenges.
4. Include a meaningful activity related to course topics (optional and should not exceed five minutes).

Participation in this event is mandatory and is a key component of the community engagement grade.

Grading Rubric

The service learning project, including the final presentation, accounts for 25% of the final course grade. This is divided into three categories, each worth 8.33% of the final grade:

1. Construction of the learning project.
2. Execution of the learning project.
3. End of Semester Community Engagement Presentation.